

Rocky Mountain Area Decision Support Group

The purpose of this document is to provide the background for the development and deployment of a Decision Support Group in the Rocky Mountain Area. The document describes:

1. The Purpose of the Decision Support Group (DSG)
2. Recommended Composition of the DSG
3. Recruitment strategy of a cadre for the DSG and
4. Dispatch protocols for the DSG

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Decision Support Group (DSG) is to assist Agency Administrators (AA) and Incident Commanders (IC) with the analysis and development of a Decision Analysis Reports (DAR) and the associated course of action for an extended or long duration wildfires managed by local unit T3¹ Incident Management Organizations (IMOs).

The DSG is not a separate IMO but assists the AA/IC with:

- Identifying current and future needs relative to develop a course of action for potential medium to long duration events relative to strategic and incident objectives using any or all of the following:
 - Fire Behavior Modeling (Short and Long Term)
 - Risk/Values Assessment
 - Developing Management Action Points and associated organizational or staffing needs

During an incident, the DSG can provide mentoring and skill development to local unit organizations. The DSG or its members can be available for off-site/consultation and remote support depending on local unit needs and incident complexity.

Recommended Composition of the DSG

The recommended composition of the DSG is as follows:

1. **FUM1/2/SOPL** – The Fire Use Manager (FUMA) position has recently transitioned to a Strategic Operational Planner (SOPL) position. Regardless of this transition, the FUMA skills developed for wildfires managed for resource objectives remain relevant to/for any extended to long term wildfire. FUMAs/SOPLs, provide expertise and experience in developing courses of action and mitigation measures to assess trade-offs between risks, costs, and benefits. These personnel are skilled in the use and interpretation of many of the new decision support tools which are available through WFDSS.

¹ The focus of the DSG is to support local T3 organizations and units with Response Level 2 and 3 Decision Analysis Report development, not to “mentor” or support RMA T1 and 2 teams. The RMA T1 and 2 teams were configured beginning in the 2009 season to be capable of managing the full spectrum of wildland fire strategic and tactical responses. The DSG is not intended to be an overhead team; it is strictly for support to local units.

2. **Fire Behavior Specialist** - (FSPPro, Analyst Assisted Short-Term Fire Behavior, BEHAVE, RERAP and FARSITE). – The Fire Behavior Specialist predicts the potential area and extent of burning to assist in assessing long-term risk. The Fire Behavior Specialist also predicts the potential of a fire to reach certain values that may be threatened over the long term and the potential timing of a fire ending event. Depending on the complexity of the incident the role of the Fire Behavior Specialist role may be filled with a qualified FBAN or LTAN, or FBAN/LTAN trainees; or WFDSS fire behavior technical specialists (see Recommended RMA minimum WFDSS qualifications).
3. **Operations Specialist** - The Operations Specialist (who should have experience in incident operations from managing fires for resource objectives) develops management actions and estimated costs with local unit input commensurate with predicted fire behavior, risk assessment, fuel types, fuel continuity, overall objectives, and defined management concerns. Depending on the complexity of the incident the role of the Operations Specialist may be filled by a STxx, TFLD, DIVS, OPS2, etc.
4. **Fire GIS Specialist** – The Fire GIS Specialist using available technology produces maps and other products required to prepare incident maps and displays. The Fire GIS Specialist supports the Fire Behavior Specialist in the development of data layers for fire behavior analysis and the Operations Specialist in displaying Management Action Points (MAPs) and other critical Incident Information. The Fire GIS Specialist must have sufficient fire experience to adapt to the fire management environment. This background helps GIS technical specialists perform GIS on fires and other risk incidents that require a spatial component. It is recommended that a fully qualified GISS be requested to fill the Fire GIS specialist role for complex incidents and a GISS (T) can be used on simpler incidents.

Organizational needs to provide decision support will vary significantly with site-specific circumstances. Position skill level should be commensurate with the fire situation and needs.

Recruitment strategy

The RMCG will recruit for and maintain a list (cadre) of individuals for the four recommended positions (above) to fill resource orders for the Decision Support Group. It is recommended that the Fire Behavior Specialist and Operations Specialist have had previous experience and skills managing or participating in long duration fires.

At this point time we do not recommend recruiting a trainee cadre for the DSG. Instead local units will be strongly encouraged to identify fuels or other resource specialists who demonstrate competency/interest in technical fire behavior modeling and analysis along with operations skills positions to shadow/assist the DSG. This element of the task group's recommendation should be evaluated following the 2010 fire season to determine the effectiveness of this approach in building local capacity.

Dispatch Protocols

If a Decision Support Group is needed the following procedure should be utilized:

1. Contact your Agency Point of Contact as specified below.

Agency	Name	Number
USFS	Paul Langowski	303-275-5307
USFS	Brenda Wilmore	970-328-5891
CO BLM	Ken Kerr	303-239-3693
CO/WY BLM	Gwenan Poirier	303-239-3689
NPS	Linda Kerr	303-969-2883
USFWS	Neal Beetch	303-445-4367
BIA	TBA	
States	TBA	

If the Agency POC is not available, contact the Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center (RMAcc) Coordinator on Duty.

2. With your Agency POC determine the positions and skill level/expertise needed
3. Name request the identified positions.
 - a) Note in Special Needs field in the ROSS order – “For Decision Support Group”

Proposal and Protocols developed by,

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